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Environment Department, Bernalillo County Plan Albuquerque Public Meeting to Discuss New Septic Tank Rules

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and Bernalillo County will hold a public meeting in Albuquerque on Tuesday May 24 to explain newly revised regulations that control septic tanks and other household sewage treatment and disposal systems. The meeting will be at 6 pm on Tuesday May 24 at the Mountain View Community Center 201 Prosperity SE.

The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) recently approved these regulations. They revise wastewater treatment standards that will reduce ground and surface water pollution, provide a mechanism to bring unpermitted systems into NMED oversight, establish monitoring requirements for advanced sewage treatment systems, provide for better maintenance of all types of systems and create certification and training requirements for wastewater professionals.

The new rules were approved April 6, and will become effective in June. A copy of the new rules, and a presentation summary, can be downloaded from the NMED Liquid Waste Web page:
<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/fod/LiquidWaste/index.html>.

In addition to nearly 1,200 water supply wells, on-site septic systems have contaminated 355 stream miles in New Mexico. NMED has noted areas of septic contamination throughout New Mexico including in Albuquerque's South Valley, the Espanola area, Hobbs and southern Dona Ana County.

Once the new regulations go into effect, all undeveloped lots shall immediately comply with the new regulations if the lot is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ acre and the depth to groundwater is less than 100 feet. If a lot is $\frac{1}{2}$ acre to $\frac{3}{4}$ acre and greater than 100 feet to ground water, with a private well, it will have three years to come into compliance. If the lot is $\frac{1}{2}$ acre to $\frac{3}{4}$ acre, with a depth to ground water greater than 100 feet and on a public water system, it will have five years to be developed utilizing a conventional system.

Under the new regulations developments on lots smaller than $\frac{3}{4}$ acre will be required to install advanced treatment units instead of conventional septic systems. The new regulations also establish maintenance and sampling requirements to assure that the advanced treatment units are working properly.

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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